Measures to provide reasonable price of paddy to farmers

†*213. SHRI VEER PAL SINGH YADAV: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken any measure to provide reasonable price of paddy to the farmers directly and promptly;

(b) the target fixed by Government for procurement of paddy during this year; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) The Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP), while formulating its recommendations on price policy for paddy and other commodities considers a number of important factors which include cost of production, changes in input prices, input/output price parity, trends in market prices, demand and supply situation, inter-crop price parity, effect on industrial cost structure, effect on general price level, effect on cost of living, international market price situation and parity between prices paid and prices received by the farmers, Accordingly, MSP for 2008-09 was fixed at Rs.850 per quintal for paddy (common) and at Rs.880 per quintal for paddy Grade 'A', which represents an increase of 31.8% and 30.4% respectively over the previous year. The MSP of paddy covers the all India projected average cost of production of Rs.619 per quintal. Further, in order to benefit farmers as well as to maximize the procurement of paddy/rice, an incentive bonus of Rs.50 per quintal over and above the MSP has been allowed during the current Kharif Marketing Season 2008-09.

To provide price support to the farmers, FCI and agencies of the State Government procure paddy/rice conforming to the prescribed specifications at the MSP plus incentive bonus, if any. In order to widen the coverage of MSP operation as well as to avoid the distress sale of paddy/rice, FCI and State Governments have been allowed to engage other agencies for procurement in areas where the infrastructure is weak. During 2008-09 upto 14.7.2009, Government agencies have procured 316 lakh tonnes of rice. However, farmers are free to sell their produce in the open market if that is advantageous to them.

(b) and (c) Since sowing of paddy crop of 2009-10 is still in progress, no estimate of paddy/rice procurement has been finalized.

Diversion of kerosene and foodgrains from PDS

*214. SHRI RAHUL BAJAJ: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state the estimated percentage of diversion of kerosene and foodgrains from the Public Distribution System (PDS) to the black market and the annual cost to the public exchequer of such diversion?

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): Government from time to time gets evaluation done of functioning of Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS). The latest evaluation is by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER). The Council has submitted reports on concurrent evaluation of TPDS in six states (Assam, Mizoram, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh & Rajasthan) in November, 2007 and for six more states (Kerala, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand & Delhi) in January, 2009.

These reports have indicated effectiveness of delivery mechanism of TPDS and satisfaction of households regarding quality of foodgrains received. The report also mentions mis-targeting of beneficiaries and diversion of foodgrains under TPDS in some of the states. However, the levels of diversion inferred in the studies cannot be taken to be constant. Therefore, accurate assessment of quantities sold in black-market through diversion is not available.

In another study commissioned to asses the genuine demand of kerosene in different State/UTs, NCAER has estimated the total diversion of kerosene meant for distribution under the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) at 38.6% of the total sale of TPDS kerosene in 2004.

Harassment to passengers by ticket checking staff

*215. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR:
SHRI NAND KISHORE YADAV:
Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of registered cases of misbehaviour, molestation and harassment to train passengers by ticket checking staff during journey in the last three years till 15th July 2009, year-wise, zone-wise and train-wise; and

(b) the details of the action taken against the guilty ticket checking staff, year-wise, zone-wise and case-wise?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (KUMARI MAMATA BANERJEE): (a) and (b) A zone-wise statement showing the details of registered cases of misbehaviour, molestation and harassment to train passengers by Ticket Checking staff during journey in the last 3 years i.e 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009 (upto 30th June) is given in the enclosed Statement (*See* below). During the last three years, in all 92 complaints regarding misbehaviour, molestation and harassment to train passengers by ticket checking staff were received. Out of which, in 20 cases criminal case have been registered, in 44 cases departmental action has been taken against the staff, 24 cases could not be established, in 2 cases complaints have been withdrawn and 2 cases are under enquiry to identify the ticket checking staff. Out of total 92 cases, in 02 cases of molestation criminal case has been registered against the concerned staff. In one case, the TTE has been convicted and the other case is under trial in the court of law and the TTE has been placed under suspension.